

Recommendations of the NGO, Government and International Donor Organizations Developed During the USAID and World Bank Institute Projects Roundtable on Community Involvement in the Donor Organizations Projects

On January 21-23, 2004, the USAID Central Asia Natural Resources Management Program (NRMP) and the World Bank Institute-financed Community Empowerment Network Project (CEN) organized a joint field visit and roundtable on Community Involvement in Donor Organizations Projects for the community-based organization members, local authorities and journalists from Djizzak, Kashkadarya, Khorezm, Navoi, and Samarkand Regions. The aim of the event was to facilitate an information exchange among community members, local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders involved into the implementation of development projects funded by international donor agencies. The most important question to answer was "How local NGOs, initiative groups and mass media can contribute into making these projects sustainable in the future?"

During this two-day event, participants learnt about the NRMP Water District Improvements project in the Zerafshan River Basin, evaluated the impact and importance of its implementation and built a dialogue with local community members, authorities and public organizations. The participants also had an opportunity to look at the water structure reconstruction and irrigation rehabilitation activities being implemented by USAID/NRMP. This allowed them to better understand the project's benefits including more efficient water monitoring and allocation that is to, result in improved water management and increased agricultural yields.

The officials from the Uzbek Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Amu-Surkhan River Basin Authority and Zerdolvodkhoz also took part in the discussion, which helped improving the relationship between government and non-government organizations' representatives dramatically.

The Roundtable participants developed the following recommendations for making the NRMP Water District Improvements project in the Zerafshan River Basin sustainable. The principles and recommendations listed below can also be used to promote the sustainability concept for other various donor organizations projects in general:

1. *Pay more attention at shaping public awareness about the Project;*
2. *Conduct press-conference on the Project making as much public aware of it as possible in order to provide the correct information (first hand) to mass media about the Project benefits;*
3. *Conduct regular meetings with the communities that will be impacted by the Project activities;*
4. *Create a network of related NGOs and local authorities to keep the information exchange and circulation about the Project going constantly;*
5. *Conduct internet conferences and chats regularly about the Project among the network members;*
6. *Create Public Service Announcements and promotional videos about the Project;*
7. *Create an educational program on water conservation to include into curriculum of educational institutions in the country;*
8. *Use the international examples and experience as a base for making donor organizations projects sustainable. Refer to lessons learned in the Unites States, European, Japan and other countries;*
9. *Create a work group of NGOs and local authorities working on the sustainability issues for the Project;*
10. *Involve NGO/community into the initial assessment stage before the donor projects even start. Ask for the community's opinion and come up with the solutions beneficial for all parties.*